



# California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Docket #: R.03-02-034

Media Contact: PUC Press Office, 415.703.1366, [news@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:news@cpuc.ca.gov)

### **PUC TAKES STEPS TO BRING TELEPHONE SERVICE TO UN-SERVED AREAS**

SAN FRANCISCO, September 18, 2003 -- The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) today determined the types of communities that can qualify for grant funding that helps pay for extending telecommunications services to locations that do not currently have telephone service. The Commission also adopted interim rules for its Rural Telecommunications Infrastructure Grant Program.

The Rural Grant Program was established under Assembly Bill 140 to help provide telecommunications service where otherwise a community could not afford to pay the line extension fee. The maximum funding level is \$10 million per year with no more than \$2.5 million per project.

The criteria communities must meet to qualify for funding includes factors such as the number of people served, the level of local support, as well as health and safety reasons. For example, the Commission placed a priority on communities that have schools, hospitals, and health clinics currently without basic telecommunications service.

The Rural Grant Program is limited to communities that have a median household income equal to or lower than the Universal Lifeline Telephone Service income qualifying levels for a family of four (currently \$27,800).

Commission staff will initially select qualifying applicants and propose to the Commission, by way of Resolution, the applications to which it believes should receive the grants. In that Resolution, the Commission will establish the procedures for awarding those grants based on the interim rules and adopted eligibility criteria.

The Commission will establish an annual filing deadline for applicants.

###